

Organizing for the Explosive Micro Decade

Microcomputer Industry Trade Association

The microcomputer industry has grown up, approaching one billion dollars a year in 1980. With this growth have come problems...

... wasted money on poorly managed trade shows; software copyright violations; lack of standards; "World Power Systems" ripoffs...

The Microcomputer Industry Trade Association (MITA) was formed in late 1978 by a group of industry leaders to deal with these problems and to help companies in all areas of the microcomputer industry: Personal and small business microcomputer manufacturers, software suppliers, wholesalers, distributors, retailers, peripherals manufacturers, publishers, network and information suppliers, systems houses, consultants, and education and training marketers. Over 70 companies are members of MITA.

Member Communications

MITA is the first trade association to provide an electronic mail service for member communication. It offers no-subscription-fee access to CompuServe's MicroNET. Members pay only connect time charges.

This service can act as a channel for MITA members. Via a bulletin board, they can alert dealers to defective products, broken delivery promises, or misleading advertising, for example.

Distribution Development

MITA is developing guidelines for improved product distribution, including dealer training, service, flooring plans, margins, and cooperative advertising. MITA is also exploring ways to protect dealers when manufacturers increase their prices and ways to deal with the software copyright violation issue.

Standards

Lack of industry standards has seriously hampered the industry's growth. MITA plans to develop standards on the following subjects: How long before a product is available should you start advertising it and taking orders for it? If a product slips, what do you do about early orders? What kind of standards are we going to recommend for warranty, service, and support (hardware and software)? To enforce these standards, MITA is developing a member certification program and seal. MITA members that comply with standards will be authorized to display the MITA seal on their premises and in advertising and trade show booths.

Seminars

Every day, *Commerce Business Daily* lists dozens of data processing procurement solicitations by the federal government. Microcomputer firms and dealers are largely unaware of this lucrative market, and of the fact that the Small Business Set-Aside program favors small businesses. To counter this, MITA will offer a seminar in the San Francisco Bay area in Summer 1980, "Marketing Microcomputer

Systems to the Federal Government," taught by experienced Washington data processing marketing consultants.

To assist members with financing, MITA is also planning a series of briefings by MITA members for securities analysts and venture capitalists. A leading Washington marketing consulting firm specializing in this field has agreed to manage these meetings and assist members with presentations. MITA members will pay a nominal fee for participation.

MITANews

Starting in Summer 1980, MITA will publish MITANews, a monthly newsletter designed to bring members objective, unbiased information. MITANews will cover trade shows (which ones are successful; cost comparisons; exposes on "show-busting" techniques such as simultaneous scheduling, etc.) and other topics of interest to the microcomputer industry.

Washington Representation

Decisions are being made right now in Washington that may seriously affect the future of your business. For example, the Communications Act Rewrite may allow Western Electric — a subsidiary of AT&T — to manufacture and market small business computers; FCC decisions on RF modulators have hiked the price of some personal computers and are cutting into dealer sales; and future home information systems, such as teletext, are being carved out right now by a government-industry committee representing only large corporate interests.

To properly represent the microcomputer industry in Washington, MITA has retained Wewer & Mahn, P.C., a law firm specializing in data processing and telecommunications. Using MITANews, this firm will alert MITA members to forthcoming legislation, agency actions, and closed-door meetings that will impact our industry. They will also arrange for MITA members to testify in key congressional hearings and become involved in important government-industry committees.

Discounts

MITA has arranged for liberal member travel discounts. MITA members will receive a card, free, entitling them to a 30% discount on rental cars, along with 10% or more on hotels and restaurants around the U.S. and a baggage loss reporting system.

Future Services

MITA is continuing to develop member services, such as comprehensive low-cost group insurance plans. MITA welcomes your suggestions.

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